

# THE MEDICAL NEWS

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#### MEDICAL REFORM.

Medical reform is the topic of prominent interest at the present time. Not only in this country, but also in France and England, it engages general attention. Everywhere the profession seems to have sunk beneath its proper level, abuses have crept into its organization which threaten to degrade it to an equality with the humblest trade, and so appalling has become this downward tendency, that its more worthy members have felt it incumbent on them to unite in the most zealous exertions to endeavour to elevate it again to the lofty position it is justly entitled to occupy. In France a Medical Congress assembled last year, which received the most flattering attention and support from the Minister of Public Instruction, and various salutary measures of reform were recommended, several of which the government has already adopted and enacted laws to enforce. In Great Britain reform has for years been agitated, but the difficulty of reconciling conflicting interests, and the obstacles interposed by various corporations

unwilling to have their chartered rights interfered with, have defeated every scheme hitherto proposed. In little more than a month a National Medical Convention will assemble in Philadelphia to deliberate upon the measures which should be adopted to elevate the honour and respectability, to advance the knowledge, extend the usefulness, and protect the interests of the medical profession of this country. As various projects may be proposed for this purpose, it cannot but be a matter of interest to know the opinions of those who have devoted attention to the subject: and believing that we could not better occupy our columns, we devote the greater part of this number, as we shall also of the next one, to the discussion of the topics likely to engage the attention of the convention.

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*An Introductory Address, delivered before the Medical Class of the University of Pennsylvania. By SAMUEL JACKSON, M. D. Nov. 3, 1846. Philadelphia, 1846.*

A large portion of this apposite and eloquent lecture is devoted to the consideration

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of the present condition of the profession—the measures which have been suggested for remedying the abuses and grievances which are so justly complained of,—and of the impediments which are opposed to carrying out suitable measures of reform.

The learned Professor commences with the proposition that “perfection does not belong to this world;” that “to whichever side we turn, whatever operations we study or events we contemplate, we meet with the appearance of imperfection; there is something which strikes us as defective—or at least falls short of what we consider as the greatest possible good. Illustrations are given of the correctness of this proposition, both in the physical and moral world; the dissatisfaction which exists at the present state of things is noticed, and he states that there now prevails, a forward impulse to extend the bounds of knowledge; to perfect the arts and sciences; to unfold the charities of life; to render man wiser and better, refine his nature, and elevate his intelligence.

“In the medical profession,” the lecturer then remarks, “there is not less of dissatisfaction with its organization, its condition and position in society. This feeling is universal. The last winter a medical congress assembled in Paris, the representatives of the practitioners of France, to take into consideration the state of the profession, and to devise the means for protecting its interests, to elevate its character, and to increase its usefulness.

“For several years, in England, the same questions have been subjects of lively agitation. In the last five years, repeated attempts have been made, on the part of the government, to reorganize the medical profession, and place it on a better, more uniform, and stable footing, consistent with the higher advancement of the science. These attempts have proved failures. They have been defeated by insuperable obstacles, caused by previous partial and ignorant legislation. Four bills were successively introduced into Parliament by Sir James Graham, the home secretary, and were withdrawn, from the difficulty of reconciling the numerous conflicting interests involved.

“The existing organization of the English medical profession is highly objectionable, even absurd. It is a disgrace to the intelligence of the profession, and the superior civilization of the government and the people. There is no uniformity or regu-

larity in the modes of admission into the profession, or of the requirements exacted for the authority to exercise its difficult and responsible art. It is composed of different classes, apothecaries, general practitioners, surgeons, and physicians. For many years the bulk of the profession were apothecaries, who, by a ridiculous decision of the House of Lords, in the reign of James I., were authorized to prescribe for, and attend on, the sick, but could not charge or take a fee as physicians. Remuneration for their services could only be obtained by the quantity of physic they could compel the patient to swallow, and for which they could alone make a charge.

“This absurd regulation imparted to English medicine its highly active and perturbing character, which, to a great extent, it still retains. The apothecaries composing the mass of the practitioners, superficially educated, always doing, seldom observing, lost sight of the natural history of diseases: they had no conception that all acute diseases had a law, which, if undisturbed by accidental circumstances, would carry them through, and that nature, in numerous cases, was the safest and best doctor. These are truths to which the English medical profession are now awakening, and the mistake is made in supposing them to be new discoveries. They have been termed ‘*young physic*,’ though they date back to the time of Hippocrates, and were to be found in all the prominent authorities of the continent.

“In this country the discontent of the profession has not been less. Its condition does not correspond with its desires, nor does it fulfil the expectations of the community. In its general qualifications it is below the level of a learned and liberal profession, exercising a most difficult art, requiring the combination of knowledge, judgment, and skill. The public, too, cannot often perceive the difference that should separate the graduated physician and the ignorant empiric. The ground of preference between them is not strikingly apparent.

“From the growing sense of these defects, in this country, a proposition was started for the holding of a medical convention. It assembled in New York the last spring. The representation of the medical public, in this body, was too incomplete to authorize the adoption of any general measures, and after the appointment of some

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committees to prepare and arrange matters for consideration, it adjourned to meet in this city in May next.

"It will not be thought, I am sure, inappropriate to open this subject, and to bring before you the difficulties and grievances of which the profession complain. You have an interest in it. In a short time you will be members of the profession, and will encounter these obstacles, and be plunged into these annoyances, of the existence of which many of you may not have heard, or seriously thought of, before commencing your present career.

"Allusion will be made only to the more prominent objections; those of minor import will be passed by.

"The first is, the crowded state of the profession. There are more practitioners than are required for the wants of the community. The business growing out of medical services will not afford, from the excess of physicians, a fair remuneration for the time, labour, and expense necessary for a complete medical education, and to many will not yield even a subsistence. There is truth in this statement. A ratio of disease to population always exists. The ordinary maladies which prevail, as inflammations, the functional disorders and chronic affections, brought on by the wear and tear, or the decline of the organs, and most sporadic diseases, are so fixed as not to vary one or two per cent. from year to year. The zymotic diseases, as epidemic, endemic, and contagious diseases, prevailing for a period and then ceasing, cause the fluctuations in the ratio of disease to population, and in the rate of mortality.

"If it were not for this source of irregularity, the calculation of the number of physicians required to population could be made with perfect exactness. It would not probably exceed more than one to 2500 or 3000 of population. But as zymotic diseases recur every few years, a larger proportion of medical attendants are necessary. Allowing for this variation, one physician to 1500 of population is quite as many as might be permitted in a well arranged community.

"The overstock of the profession is productive of many ills. It causes, amongst the unsuccessful, misery to the worthy and conscientious, who preserve their principles, and pine in want and obscurity. It tempts the feeble in moral character to resort to ad captandum tricks; to lapse into irregularity

of conduct; to sink to the abasement of quackery; and even to the perpetration of criminal practices, under the pressure of hard necessity. It is to the interests, both of the profession and the community, that too great an excess of physicians should be guarded against.

In the second place it is alleged, that the Medical Institutions of this country have not kept pace with the expansion of medical knowledge, or risen with the elevation of the science: that the courses of lectures in the schools are too limited, and the duration of study too short; that the general education of physicians is unworthy the character of a liberal profession, a result attributed to the schools neglecting to require of students a collegiate, or other enlarged course of education, preliminary to matriculation: and that the medical diploma conferred from too low a standard of examination, is fast ceasing to be the evidence of professional qualifications; that it is degraded to a mere certificate of attendance on one or two courses of lectures.

"And, lastly, it is a general complaint, that quacks and empirics, medicasters and quack salvers, swarm like Egyptian locusts over the face of the land, imposing, by all manner of arts, on the ignorant, the weak-minded, and the credulous: that quackery and humbug, adapted to the popular capacity and intelligence, are more efficient to success in life, than are ability, knowledge, and high cultivation; that the public press, the mind-governing power of the masses, venal and prostitute, is the mercenary of charlatan impostors, aiding them to prey on society, to corrupt morals and to disseminate falsehood.

"Such are the leading abuses and grievances of which the profession complain. They are for the most part true; they cannot be gainsaid. But how are they to be remedied? What are the remedies? What remedies can reach them?

"The monarchical governments of Continental Europe have effectually prevented most of these irregularities and corruptions by the exercise of administrative regulation. The crowding of the profession cannot occur to any extent, from the restrictions imposed on the admission into its ranks. No one is permitted to follow medicine as a profession who has not a diploma, or the authority of a medical body. In some of the Italian and German principalities and

kingdoms, an especial board is provided for the government of the profession, the regulation of medical schools, and the superintendence of all that pertains to medicine. Medical instruction is regulated by law, and extends over several years. Hospitals are placed at the disposition of the teachers. The education is practical as well as didactic; classical and other attainments are required; and the diploma conferred by a few schools, is granted only after repeated and rigid examinations.

"Gross quackery is completely suppressed; empiricism having scientific pretensions is sometimes tolerated, but closely observed, to ascertain its value. The community is guarded against the deceptions, the practices, and the hazardous expedients of ignorant pretenders, and of reckless and needy adventurers. These measures are direct; they meet all the difficulties, and strike at the root of the evil. But they are not applicable to our country; they are repugnant to the genius of our institutions, and the principles of our government.

"The continental monarchies undertake to relieve their subjects of nearly all share in the general, social, and political affairs of life. They look after and care for the social, and even many of the domestic concerns of the people. With the exception of the despotic autocrat of the North, under the influences of modern civilization and the power of public opinion, they seek to gain popular confidence, by giving a patriarchial and paternal character to their governments. Much good may be accomplished, and much evil may be remedied and prevented, by a wise and generous administration of an absolute government, but there is not less of danger of injury and inconvenience, endured by the public, by too much of government intermeddling; by the hand of government being thrust into every man's house, and felt in every act of man's life.

"Our system of government is widely different. The Federal government has no power to interfere in any manner with the social concerns of the people. There exists no power to establish throughout the Union any general regulation of any business, or profession, or to meddle with the individual affairs of the people.

"The different state sovereignties may possess the power to regulate, within their own territories, the medical profession, and control medical schools; but with 29 sove-

reignities it would be absurd to expect any uniformity of legislation. Besides, the democratic principle we have adopted, as the ground-work of our governments, is hostile to this kind of legislation. It is the drift of this principle to confide to the people as much of the management of their social relations, and as little to the government as possible. I am for giving this principle fair play and full swing, that its true value may be determined, and its action for good and for evil, be placed broadly before the world.

"What then, may be asked, is to be done? Are the abuses, corruptions, and grievances so loudly complained of and admitted to exist, to continue without an effort to abate them? Certainly not. But they are not to be put down by legislative interposition. They are too deeply rooted to be eradicated by such means. They have their origin in the imperfect principles and anomalies, I have pointed out in the beginning of this discourse, of our false civilization; in the general ignorance, especially in respect to medical science, that pervades the public, and in the false ideas that rule society, and on which it awards its titles to merit, distinction and popular favour. The abuses and corruptions of medicine, are no others than those that extend through all ranks and classes of society. The medical profession, as part of society, could not be exempt from them. While the world continues to form its judgment of individual merit, and its estimate of success on the external accidents of fortune or power, and not on the excellencies of the head and heart, and upright conduct, society will be agitated by never-ending strife for their possession. The shortest road and the readiest means to seize on them, whether right or not, will be pursued.

"The establishment of the medical profession on a better, and its just footing, in its relation with the community, cannot be accomplished in this country, by positive regulations where there is no power to sanction or enforce them. It must come from the diffusion of knowledge; from the elevation of the moral tone of society; from a more exalted estimate of social attributes; from the spreading abroad of just ideas on the nature and objects of medicine as a science, distinct from the vulgar medicine as a trade and an art.

"The medical profession must take the advance in this movement. Let it com-



mence by reforming its own ranks; let it amend its doctrines, and refine its ethics. The medical notions of the public are derived from the medical profession, and are often antiquated opinions, that once were taught by learned professors in the schools. Can we be surprised or offended, that empirics should find favour with the public, when medicine formerly was, and continues to be, at this time, to a great extent, empirical in practice; and that 80 of 100 practitioners are but empirics. Physicians by their own conduct foster the medical errors of the community. They glorify themselves and not their science. They boast of their cures and remedies. Empirics boast also of their cures, and appeal to them, as the evidence of the power of their remedies. Before the public the ordinary practitioner and the empiric stand nearly in the same light. They are both healers; the professors of remedies and cures. The physician, it is true, is more learned, and has a more extensive assortment of cures than the quack. He may have but one, but that is a catholicon, or a panacea, and embodies all the virtues of the whole materia medica; or he may have wonder-working globules that produce miraculous effects. Of what import is it, that he who possesses a cure is an ignoramus. If he hold the great remedy, and certificates without number attest it, he can administer it as well as the most learned.

"Medicine, by such notions, is placed in a false position; and the office of a physician is misrepresented on the one hand and misunderstood on the other. Let it be understood generally that medicine is the science of organic life, cultivated in its relations to disease, and that physicians are the ministers and interpreters of organic nature and its laws; that through a knowledge of them, and of the natural agents that modify those laws, they are enabled to control and direct the actions of the forces, and operations of the functions of the animal economy, in modes best calculated to restore it to health.

"More will be done to root out empiricism by supplanting the present errors with these truths, than could be effected by the most stringent legislative action.

"The profession does not fully appreciate the greatness of its mission. By the practice of medicine man approaches near to divinity. Physicians are 'the hands of God,' the instruments of his benevolence, through whose knowledge and skill HE dispenses the

means HE has provided for the relief of suffering humanity. To convert it into a trade for the purpose, by extortionate charges, of heaping up riches for selfish ends, is a kind of profanation. There are higher rewards than wealth or power; and enjoyments more pure and exquisite than they can procure.

"The degree of Doctor of Medicine has lost its original character. It is not a warranty, as it purports to be, and once was, that the possessor of it is a fully instructed and competent physician. It is doubtful whether it can be reclaimed. Twenty-two [thirty-seven] schools now issue diplomas conferring the medical degree, and as many more will be created, it is probable, in a few years. There can be no common and elevated standard by which the conferring of it can be regulated. Neither can any alterations be made in the present period of medical lectures. It was that which was adopted at the first establishment of medical schools in this country, and appears to be so fixed a habit as to admit of no change. I do not believe that students can be induced to attend for a longer term, and there are no means of compelling them. In this school the attempt was made, and failed.

"The title of Doctor is ceasing to be a distinction. The only requisite is the cash or credit for the cost of the tin plate on which it is painted. The M. D. is fast sinking, and will probably soon reach the same ebb. In this state of affairs individuals must rely on themselves for their success and reputation. It will always be found, that the one the most gifted, who has devoted the most time and labour to the acquisition of knowledge, and who is deeply imbued with science, will stand the best chance of successful competition, and be the most likely to command the confidence of the public.

"Amidst the general decadence that threatens the medical profession, and disrepute overshadowing medical honours, it will be incumbent on the schools of highest reputation, that they should maintain a firm ground. Let them urge on the cultivation of medicine to its highest point as a science, by full and adequate courses. Let them convince the students that it is not for their interests that medicine should be slightly taught, light as a schoolboy's task, but must be laboured out by application and hard study, through scientific and philosophical instruction. Let them stand firm to their

diplomas, and refuse them to the incompetent, and when not fairly earned after a close scrutiny.

"The inexperienced student, anxious to launch his bark in life, inclines to favour superficial education, and a light examination. It is a short-sighted view and most mistaken policy, which are discovered to be such when too late. For the professors of the medical schools to yield to this disposition is the betraying of a trust, and a misleading of those incapable of knowing their true interest, and the duty they owe to themselves and to society.

"In the present state of public opinion on medicine, that a medical degree may bestow honour, inspire confidence, and be a passport to practice amongst the intelligent, it must be known throughout the country that it is conferred only when fairly and honourably won, and truly deserved.

"For my colleagues and myself I can promise, that it will continue to be, as it has been, our endeavour to give this character to the diploma of the University of Pennsylvania, the oldest school in the country. We should feel it a stigma on our own characters, that for a temporary popularity, its well-earned reputation, and time-honoured name, should be sullied by our acts.

"Other schools, it is confidently believed, will perceive it to be their true interest, and that of the profession, to pursue the same course. The students will find their prospects of future success—that fame, reputation, and fortune, depend on the acquisitions they make in knowledge and science. A sufficient body, animated by these generous motives, and ambitious of renown, will always be found to follow the schools that will urge them on and lead them in the road to distinction. Those that are content with easier and more moderate attainments, must fall to the level of common routinists, and be confounded with empirical practitioners. What lagger ever achieved fame or fortune?

"In undertaking the study of medicine and its practice, you must have perceived, gentlemen, from what has fallen in the course of my observation, that it is not a smooth path you have chosen, along which you can proceed without toil and labour. They never cease; you can know no ease. You must bend to your work with all the energies of mind and body. It is the eternal law, that all man most prizes, the richest gifts, the noblest acquisitions, the greatest

triumphs are won and forced by untiring application.

"The good Isaac Walton, in his excellent treatise, *The Complete Angler*, makes some observations I shall quote, as appropriate to our purpose and applicable to yourselves. 'Doubt not,' he says, 'but that angling is an art, and an art worth your learning; the question is rather, whether you be capable of learning it? for angling is like poetry, men are to be born so: I mean with inclinations to it, though both may be heightened by discourse and practice; but he that hopes to be a good angler, must not only have an inquiring, searching, observing wit; but he must bring a large share of hope and patience, and a love and propensity to the art itself.'

"If this be true of so simple an art as that of catching a 'sharp-sighted' trout, how much more are those qualifications and appliances demanded in him who undertakes to master the art and science of medicine; an art and science, I will assert, that require the highest order of ability for their attainment; that embrace the most varied and extended knowledge; that strike their roots into and draw their substance from most of the departments of scientific research; and for the right practice of which, integrity, truth, judgment and skill are indispensable."

*Introductory Lecture, read at the commencement of the course.*—By. S. HENRY DICKSON, M. D., Professor of the Institutes and Practice of Medicine in the Medical College of the State of South Carolina. Charleston, 1846.

Prof. Dickson has occupied the professorial chair for twenty years, and filled it with great credit to himself and advantage to his numerous pupils. His opportunities for becoming acquainted with the defects in our medical organization have been ample, and he seems to have bestowed much thought on the means of correcting them. The following extract presents his views, and we claim for them the consideration which his elevated position, his experience, his intelligence and judgment, entitle them.

"A national medical convention was held in May last, in New York city, consisting of delegates from a great many portions of the United States. This highly respectable body, during their session, entertained several impressive resolutions, and appointed an adjourned meeting for their further consider-



ation, to take place in Philadelphia in May, 1847. Among these they advocate the 'expediency of a National Medical Association for the protection of the interests of the profession—for the maintenance of their honour and respectability—for the advancement of their knowledge and the extension of their usefulness.'

"They farther recommend the 'adoption of an elevated and uniform standard of requirements for the degree of M. D., by the medical schools of the United States, and of preliminary education and attainments, to be exacted of students of medicine before they are received as such, and of the reception by our whole body of the same code of medical ethics.' And lastly, they declare 'the sense of a large majority of the convention, that the union of the business of teaching and licensing in the same hands is wrong in principle, and liable to great abuse in practice;\*' and suggest the appointment of a licensing board in each state, 'composed of representatives from its medical colleges in fair proportion, and the profession at large.'

"In these views I fully and unhesitatingly concur; and shall now proceed to offer, in support of them, such arguments and illustrations as may be condensed within the admissible limits of the present occasion. I know not how I can better employ the time allotted me for addressing you at this, our first meeting. Several of you will be soon eligible as members of this great convention; many, if not most of you, will join, I trust, without delay, the National Association, to which it will give birth before its final dispersion; and all of you are profoundly interested in the acceptance and prosecution of measures adapted to elevate the character of the profession to which you belong, and to enable it to effect, more fully, its lofty objects and beneficent purposes.

"One of the most important of the suggestions offered us by the convention, is the elevation of the standard of preliminary education, previous to the admission of students of medicine. Great care should be taken to regard this matter in all its extensive relations before any rule be laid down. We

must not make impossible demands upon the youth of our country, nor forget for a moment, the immense differences that exist, not only between ourselves and our brethren in the older communities of Europe, but also among the several sections of our own wide and rapidly spreading country. In towns and cities, the standard of early education is everywhere higher than in the dispersed populations of the interior and agricultural districts; in the Northern and Middle States than in the Southern and Western. To exact from the ambitious and diligent youth of the latter, then, the same formal acquirements, would be unfair until they have been provided with similar opportunities; and yet we cannot prohibit them from entering the arena, nor give any artificial advantages to their rivals, which shall result in driving them from the field. We know that notwithstanding the *scarcity* of schools in these regions, and their confessed *inferiority* in general, our pupils grow up into adroit surgeons and sagacious physicians. Yet, however successfully they may struggle against the difficulties that press upon them,—however high they may rise in usefulness and honour, in spite of these difficulties, nothing can be more certain than that their success would be more complete, they would attain greater honour and usefulness under better auspices and in more favourable circumstances. We must aim to hit the just medium; and while we give all due weight to early discipline and systematic training, we must offer every available inducement to the exertion of peculiar diligence and perseverance, and take care not to discourage true talent and native energy, however repressed by adverse contingencies.

"With reference to the point next to be discussed, I agree far more unreservedly with my brethren of the convention. I have pleaded for some indulgence in the reception of students at the commencement of their course; I would unite in the most extensive and stringent requisitions for the ordeal at its termination. I do this because I am satisfied that if a young man enters the office of his preceptor at a proper age, devotes a sufficient period to his course of study, and exerts, during that period, a due degree of diligence, he may easily do all that ought to be demanded of him. But he who unadvisedly commences too late the study of the most extensive of all the departments of human knowledge; runs

\* [The Professor is under a misapprehension in regard to this point. A resolution to that effect was offered, but it was referred to a committee, to report on the subject at the meeting this year, without any expression of opinion being had in relation thereto.—*Editor Med. News.*]

hastily over the condensed and aphoristic instructions of its meagre list of text books and manuals; listens drowsily, carelessly, and irregularly to a brief and compendious series of oral or written essays upon some of its numerous divisions; makes a few hurried dissections; and witnesses, at greater or less distance, an occasional operation; must, indeed, possess genius of a high order, or caution and sagacity far beyond the average, if he enters life at all fitted for its weighty duties.

"It is a grievous charge against the profession in these United States that its highest nominal rank is attainable at such a low rate of scientific acquirement, and with so little expenditure of time and labour. One cannot help being struck with the immense difference in this regard between us and our transatlantic brethren. In France the candidate must attend four courses of lectures at least, upon all the various branches of medical science, and undergo three examinations, some of the answers at which must be written extemporaneously, and in full detail. The 'preliminary literary guarantees' demanded of pupils are a Bachelor's degree in Arts, and a Bachelor's degree in Sciences. They presuppose a classical and scientific education of ten years' duration. Yet the Medical Congress which lately met in Paris, a most august and imposing body, while they express their approbation of these preliminary guarantees as 'sufficient but not too onerous,' recommend as expedient that the duration of medical studies now occupying a period of *four* years be prolonged to *five*; that an examination be exacted at the end of *each* year; and that all students be obliged to serve for at least *a year* as dressers in a hospital.

"In England, the degree of Doctor of Medicine is not to be reached with less than eight years of study. At the University of London, the most liberal of the English schools, the student cannot even enter without an examination; he cannot be matriculated unless he 'shows a competent knowledge of the classics, including the English language, history and geography, mathematics, and natural philosophy or chemistry.' Before graduating as Doctor, he must have passed two examinations for the Bachelor's degree, and 'a third, which is final,' exhibiting his attainments not only in 'physiology, general pathology, general therapeutics, hygiene, surgery, practice of physic,

midwifery, and forensic medicine, or medical jurisprudence; but also in logic, and intellectual and moral philosophy.' The number of persons admitted last year to the Doctorate of Medicine in England, was not more than 77; in our own country it amounted to fully 1000! Within the last three years, the whole number of those licensed to practise as physicians, surgeons, and apothecaries in England and Wales, is stated by the Medical Gazette at 2,721, being an annual average of 907. It is impossible to ascertain how many among us procure or assume the license to practice, which is indeed almost absolutely without restraint or limit.

"It is, I fear, entirely too late, even if it were not out of place here to discuss the question of the propriety or impropriety, the good or evil of this unrestricted system. The movement party are everywhere in the ascendant, the conservative principle almost extinguished; and we are going on to experiment freely upon the possibility of an existence untrammelled by any of the forms which, in the Old World, are associated with recollections of inequality and oppression. In our vast republic, men shall hereafter preach, litigate, and prescribe *ad libitum*; and the monopoly of skill, of preparation, and of diligence, no longer lie heavy on the bosom of the community. It is possible that these tendencies shall be arrested—but the struggle is almost hopeless. On this downward road, as on the path to the den of Cacus, *nulla vestigia retrorsum*. In the meanwhile it behoves the profession, totally unprotected as it is likely to be, by any legislative countenance, to consider how it shall preserve itself from utter prostration and annihilation. We cannot require, as I have admitted, any high standard of preparatory education—the 'preliminary literary guarantees' of the French system—but to compensate for this defect, we are bound to insist on a long-protracted and extensive course of technical studies. If human life and human health be worth consideration at all, and if professional ignorance can injure, and professional expertness can benefit mankind—questions which I cannot stoop even to entertain in this place, but shall assume the affirmative to be as clearly true as any proposition that can be submitted in language—then we should do all that we possibly can do to make the acquisition of knowledge certain, easy, full,



may, unavoidable. And how else can we effect this than by multiplying the opportunities presented to the student, and keeping him long in contact with the sources of information. Our systems must be accommodated to the wants and requirements of the average mind—the ordinary capacity. Talents and assiduity run rapidly forward and promptly overcome whatever difficulties lie in their way; but we must legislate also for dulness and indolence. These must be aided and stimulated. ‘Repetition—repetition,’ said the learned Wyttembach, ‘is to the scholar what action, action, action is to the orator;’ and by frequent repetition, even the dullest will be instructed, and the slowest urged onward. Besides this, it never should be forgotten that whatever is caught up hurriedly is apt to be slightly impressed on the understanding and the memory; while acquisitions, more deliberately made, fix themselves with greater permanence, and stand out ever after with clearer distinctness in the mind. I have already drawn a sketch of our American mode of study—text books read exclusively, or almost exclusively, cursorily, hastily; two half courses, or one brief course and a half of lectures attended—listened to perhaps;—a single dead body dissected under the eye of a demonstrator, perhaps an arm only, or a leg; a few surgical operations witnessed, such as may accidentally present themselves within the six months spent at the colleges; a few patients seen in the wards of a hospital at intervals of days, or it may be weeks. Our schools generally require three years of such study; but how seldom is even this rule fully complied with. The standard is so low that any common industry may overleap it in half the time. We demand the legal age of maturity to be attained before the reverend Doctorate shall be reached—but our transatlantic youth, like the country which gives them birth, are of so quick and precocious growth that they are universally ripened into grave manhood at or before twenty, if the family Bible and the parish register are to be trusted. There are many honourable exceptions I am aware—but I appeal to those who hear me, whether I colour or exaggerate in the picture I have thus drawn.

“It is in reference to this matter, principally perhaps, that a National Convention of physicians, and the influence which it is capable of exerting, will be available. The relaxation of definite rules—the depreciation

of the requirements for collegiate honours, are clearly owing to the colleges themselves, and result from a vehement competition—growing every day more reckless on account of the multiplication of schools. Unless some concert of action be agreed upon, the Faculties will continue to dread the suicidal effect of any special stringency or precision, in repelling students and reducing the numbers of their classes. With this concert of action, however, much may be gained; for even if some of the schools prove recusant, their refusal to be bound by a general law will serve to divide the colleges themselves into two grades—one of higher and one of lower requisitions; and thus we shall establish a precise line of distinction between the higher and lower order of attainments. The title—*per se*—I need not tell you is already worth nothing. It is either assumed at pleasure, or forced upon the tyro and the quack; and what I am obliged to share with the ignorant purchaser of a ‘patent right,’ or the concocter of secret nostrums—the mere seller of drugs, or the unprincipled pow-vow conjuror and mesmerist, I not only cease to value, but positively condemn.

“It has been proposed as a remedy for this state of things, confessedly so unhappy and injurious, that the collegiate honours of medicine should be dispensed, not by the teachers or professors of the several schools, but by trustees, committees or other bodies, organized for the purpose of examining candidates and conferring the merited titles. This proposal would be reasonable enough if the graduating power was necessarily the licensing power, and if a diploma gave a monopoly or privilege in practice. But this neither is, nor perhaps ought to be the fact. Those who are fit to be entrusted with the high office of instruction, cannot surely be unqualified to judge of the attainments of their pupils; but while their competency has been admitted, it has been suggested that their judgment is likely to be warped by partialities and prepossessions of various character. The evil thus supposed to arise may, however, be abundantly obviated by leaving the scholastic reputation of the colleges to their own care, while the community is guarded by proper regulations of which I shall speak hereafter—from the intrusion of unfit practitioners.

“When a fair standard of professional requisition has been agreed on and established, the position of any school, among its

rivals, may be readily known; in the first place by its adhesion to the common body of rules; and in the second, by the general character of its graduates. There may be some advantage in the publicity of examinations, recommended by some writers, and practised, I believe, at Geneva, N. Y.; but there are very weighty objections against it. Those experienced in examinations are aware that they constitute very imperfect and often deceptive tests of the attainments and standing of the candidates: merit—scientific merit, at least, is frequently connected with that species of timidity which confuses the memory and enchains the tongue. Young men differ widely as to the readiness and precision of their habitual language, and this difference is much increased by education. Self-possession and promptness in reply are not necessarily associated with self-possession and promptness in action; and he who would be readiest in taking up a wounded artery; or prescribing efficiently for a violent attack of menacing disease, may be uncertain, slow and fearful in his answers to the inquiry how these things should be done. I appeal to the experience of all examiners whether they do not often and involuntarily—nay, inevitably form opinions of candidates entirely different from or even opposite to those which they would have obtained from the mere examinations, however skilfully, impartially, cautiously, and patiently conducted. We who instruct you, must necessarily acquire some knowledge of you, and of your training and qualities. We cannot help inferring from our observation, your attention, your diligence, your habits of inquiry. We find some of you gifted with quickness of apprehension, who are slow of speech, and others voluble and fluent, who are dull to learn and uncertain in judgment. By meeting you here and elsewhere, and conversing with each other of you; for you have become and will continue to be for some months, objects of paramount interest to us; we must become more or less acquainted with you, perhaps even familiar. We can and do judge *fairly* of you; and the experience of a quarter of a century, enables me to affirm that we rarely fail to judge *correctly*. The character which a student carries with him hence, is almost invariably that which the world afterwards confirms and fixes upon him. Now, if the examination be only one of a series of tests and observations, as it

ought to be, to which the student is submitted before he attains the honours of the profession, it is evident that the concentration of large masses of young men in such numbers, that they cannot be personally known to their examiners, is an evil rather than a benefit, and will reconcile us to the multiplication of colleges as within a certain limit, very desirable. The good effect of the contingencies of which I have just spoken, would be done away by the publicity of the examinations. They would probably be attended chiefly, if not exclusively, by friends or enemies of the candidates, whose influence would only avail to disturb and confuse the proceedings, and give rise to future controversy and discontent.

“If such attendance were made an official duty, transiently devolving upon individuals changed from time to time, none could gain that experience necessary to its proper, and faithful, and efficient performance. If it were made an official duty, belonging to a permanent body, the result would ultimately be a mere substitution of one set of examiners by another quite as partial and susceptible of being moved unfairly, without the opportunity of forming as competent a judgment of the merits to be inquired into; for these, by the very nature of the case, are referable to character and scholastic qualification. The mortification of failure is already so unduly and unreasonably great, so strongly disproportioned to the honour of success, that any change which shall tend to increase it is unadvisable. I prefer to offer inducement upon inducement, and heap facility upon facility, to accumulate means and appliances for study and instruction, and provide an array of premiums and distinctions to prevail upon the student to exert himself, rather than leave him to indolence or permit him to hurry himself forward—and then at the end of his curriculum raise barriers which it will be difficult for him to get over. This would be both impolitic and unjust.

“I have just spoken of premiums and distinctions, and must not omit to say, that with regard to these I would follow a very different plan. While I would intrust to the several faculties, respectively, the care of the reputation of their colleges in the distribution of the ordinary titles, I would aid them in awarding special honours to such candidates as contend for them, both by the



publicity of the contest and the appointment of special judges.

"The claim presented here is of a nature to be considered and passed upon by any competent persons; and their removal from all immediate connection with the candidates is the best guarantee for their impartiality. I am disposed to advocate the institution of some such ordeal as the French Concours in the selection of Professors to fill the chairs in our universities, and find the only objection—a fatal one at present, I grant—in the want of an umpire of full and adequate authority to decide among the claimants; so also, and without being embarrassed by any similar objection, would I desire to see a fair field for public exhibition of special qualification and attainments offered to every candidate who might aspire to such distinction.

"I would here notice a singular feeling—an unfounded one as I think—a *prejudice*—often expressed by physicians in reference to the result of examinations of classes in our medical schools.

"It is often imputed as a fault, nay, a fault deserving severe censure, that they are too lenient—that too large a proportion of the classes succeed—and that too few are 'rejected.' Nothing can be more unjust or groundless than these views. In our academic institutions, the *rule* is, that the classes shall graduate; the *exceptions* are comparatively of small number. Why should it be otherwise with us? If tutors and professors have done their duty faithfully, those who have gone through the prescribed course ought to be fairly prepared for a certificate to that effect; and that is all the value—the true value of a diploma. The real cause of complaint would be and *is*, that the standard is too low, not that too many had come up to it. No one denies or doubts that *it is* too low in our country everywhere—far too low; and among others I have professed my anxious desire to elevate it, and place the American physician on a level with his transatlantic brethren; but until something is done with this purpose, I will say that the college must be indeed ill provided with teachers and means of instruction—or exceedingly unfortunate, whose Faculty are at present often under the necessity, the wretched necessity of rejecting any candidate who has fully complied with their requisitions. Such cases, I fear, will occasionally occur

to all of us; but instead of feeling it to be a matter of regret or apology that they should seldom offer themselves in the institution to which I have the honour to belong, I am, on the other hand, proud to say, that our commencements are frequently in the old phrase, 'Maiden Sessions,' in which we enjoy the comfort of carrying through a series of examinations, which, if not altogether satisfactory, yet, on the whole, present no reason for inflicting, on any one of our pupils, the intolerable pang—the indelible stigma of a rejection. This, we are indeed always anxious to avoid. It is our studied policy to prevent, if possible, the application of any candidate, of whose qualifications we entertain, previously, any serious doubt: and as I have said already, we cannot help knowing, with probable accuracy, the actual standing of all under our care.\*

"It may now be asked, and it is the most difficult question to be discussed by the National Convention—what 'uniform and elevated standard of requirements for the degree of M. D. shall be adopted by the medical

\* "What proportion each college might separately show of rejected candidates would be difficult to ascertain under the present system of attempted secrecy, although it is a topic of ceaseless, earnest, and interested inquiry among medical students everywhere.

"The number of young men engaged in attending lectures last year in the United States, was computed at 3675 (St. Louis Journal), of whom about 1000 (one in 3½ nearly) received the degree of M. D. On looking over 'the Statistics of Medical Institutions of the United States,' collated from the published catalogues, I have found this to be a pretty fair statement of the proportion in each institution, the large presenting a somewhat greater relative number than the smaller schools, for the obvious reason, that they are more apt to be resorted to by those who, at the conclusion of their course of study, are altogether free to choose for the mere name of their diploma; but the difference is so slight as to be merely fractional.

"We have some facts in the London Medical Gazette, March, 1846, relevant and of instructive purport. During the three years 1842-3-4, the Royal College of Physicians examined 161 candidates and granted 160 licenses. The University of Cambridge granted 10 diplomas and 9 licenses; Oxford gave diplomas to all who applied, 6, and licensed 7 out of 8. London University, at its first examination, rejected 36 per cent.; at its second only 10 per cent. The Royal College of Surgeons, which is much complained of as passing unfit persons, examined 1776 candidates, and granted 1576 diplomas."

schools of the United States?' I answer, that we must be directed somewhat in the formation of a rule by reference to the preliminary education of the pupils. Those destitute of a liberal foundation, in classical studies, for the professional, scientific, and technical attainments indispensably to be exacted, should be required to pass five years at least, under the care and instruction of some established practitioner; and to attend three courses of chemical and anatomical lectures, dissecting, personally, at least two entire subjects; and two *complete* courses on all the other branches taught in the schools. By the word *complete* here, I mean to define actual attendance throughout, which shall be proved (as in Paris) by frequent inscriptions on registers kept for the purpose; not the *implied attendance* now customary in our country, when a student may 'take out his tickets' 'and go through the whole business of the session by proxy; seeing the lions' of our cities—partaking of all their amusements—and visiting all their places of resort, whether creditable or discreditable, whether by day or by night—their theatres, circuses, race courses, night cellars and gambling houses.

"The academical degree of Bachelor of Arts from any established university, should carry with it the privilege of abbreviating the course to *three years* study in an office, and two full series of lectures, with dissections. If the student have not enjoyed the advantage of a collegiate education, he may be allowed a similar privilege on producing a proper certificate from some competent and well known classical professor or teacher, of his having attained such literary proficiency as would entitle him to a degree in college.

"We do not consider an apprenticeship of seven years too long for the acquirement of a mechanical art: *five* are not more than sufficient surely for making ourselves acquainted with the divine art of healing; they will scarcely suffice, indeed, for the acquisition of its mere rudiments. After graduating at Yale College, I spent that period in the office of a most laborious and distinguished physician, and would gladly have extended it still farther, but for the *res angusta domi*, which forced me to enter into active life and provide for myself.

"It has always appeared strange to me that our medical schools—in this particular, unlike and inferior to our academical insti-

tutions—have demanded from their classes no course of reading. Close familiarity with good books, and an intimate acquaintance with their contents, constitute perhaps the best test by which we shall separate the quack or impostor, the mere empiric and the unimproving routine practitioner from the truly scientific physician, deserving of the sacred name. If you do not acquire, early in life, a taste for literary pursuits, a fondness for extensive reading, depend upon it you will make little or no progress; you will learn little, if anything valuable, yourselves, and will pass through life without communicating anything valuable to others, or adding one useful item to the general stock of knowledge. The student who confines himself within the narrow circle of his text books, is destined to live the life of a drudge, and to pass from life without leaving behind him one permanent trace or footmark.

"The Convention declare their conviction that 'the union of the business of teaching and licensing in the same hands, is wrong in principle, and liable to great abuse in practice.' 'As a correction of this abuse,' they 'propose the appointment of a Licensing Board in each state, composed of representatives from its medical colleges in fair proportion, and from the profession at large.' The general views thus briefly laid down are substantially correct, and commend themselves to physicians everywhere, and to the public at large: but they comprise numerous difficulties as to details at every step. In the several states of this Union the laws have varied greatly in regard to the license to practise physic. Before the year 1817, South Carolina knew no restriction whatever; in that year, a law was passed creating two Licensing Boards—one in Columbia and the other in Charleston—our Medical Society. The erection of the medical society into a body of trustees of a medical school in 1823, brought about here the very state of things denounced by the Convention. I am not aware, however, that any practical evil resulted from this union, although it is evident there was much opening for abuse. When a second college—the present—was chartered in 1832, the right to license was conferred upon it also,—and from subsequent changes, it has resulted that this is the only Licensing Board in the state. Our diploma is, in itself, a license, and it is made the duty of our trustees and



faculty to institute an examination into the competency of all such applicants for a license as may present themselves. This apparent privilege is a real burden, and a very embarrassing one. Not only is the seeming benefit shared in fact with the patent right which opens the door to every the most ignorant pretender and mountebank; but our diploma, with its pretty seal, its fine motto, and its learned and high-sounding phrases—the insignia of the highest professional rank is thus brought practically into competition and contrast with the mere certificate of license; the latter being obtainable by a brief exhibition of retentive memory—the possible result simply of the well known process of ‘grinding’ or ‘cramming,’ as it is called in the British universities; the former being the ultimate termination of a definite and protracted course of study and mental training. I say nothing of the extreme difference in the cost of the two documents thus perfectly equal in the eye of our wise law—(Coke’s ‘Perfection of Human Reason.’) This is an absurd condition of things which cannot and ought not to continue to exist; but the remedy for the evil is unfortunately not in our own hands. We must endeavour to enlighten the community as to their true and pressing interest in this matter; and to convince them that infinite injury must, in the end, accrue to them from their neglect and indifference on the subject. It ought to be regarded as the chief and most fundamental element in the discussion of the high political topic of municipal hygiene. In order to enjoy an elevated degree of public health, surely one of the predominant considerations in every state, city or community, it is absolutely necessary to set apart a class of well educated practitioners of medicine. Allow for a moment the truth of the proposition—too absurd for comment, but not too absurd to be believed and acted upon by thousands of civilized and instructed men—allow for a moment that actual disease may be cured by the will of a gifted disciple of Mesmer, or by a peculiar magnetic influence emanating from the body of such an one, or by means revealed to a clairvoyant subject in whatever form of prophetic or miraculous inspiration,—or by the universal use of cold water, or the universal application of wet sheets,—or the unlimited administration of whatever familiar drugs or secret nostrums in doses infinitely large or infinitesimally small, secured by patent or benevolently

made free to all mankind; yet, no one can doubt that a large extent of varied knowledge, an immense amount of learning, a wide expanse of reading, and constant inquiry and research are necessary to prepare any one, however wise and sagacious, or inscrutably endowed with mystic powers, for the management of that department of political economy which looks to the prevention of disease by the removal, avoidance, or counteraction of its causes; the noblest office this of the learned and experienced physician. Good legal institutions can only be derived from learned and experienced lawyers, and pure and undefiled religion, kept alive only by a body of learned and refined clergy. It is not enough that this matter should be left as it now is, merely to free competition and social patronage. In all other professions besides ours, the absolute necessity for protracted, careful and diligent training, is universally acknowledged. To every mechanical trade an apprenticeship must be served; book-keeping does not come by inspiration; a formal examination, ordered by the judge from the bench, and conducted by grave associates of the long robe, must precede admission to the bar; a pilot cannot attain, without serious labour and assiduity, a regular branch; an engineer must rise by accumulating proofs of theoretical qualification and practical competency; the pulpit of every sect is guarded by custom, conventional arrangement and positive regulation. In compensation for these restraints, carefully defined by ordinance or universally recognized, society, by law or by customs having all the force of law, confers on those who comply with the conditions thus imposed, certain privileges of specific value and established importance. An intruder is not permitted to deliver his drowsy common-places in the church; may not annoy his honour in court with unskilful and irrelevant pleadings; or blow up a steamboat, or locomotive, or run an unlucky vessel on a bar: these immunities are reserved for the formally initiated. But neither by law nor custom among us is any one prohibited or prevented from undertaking ‘to minister to the mind diseased,’ or the body imbecile, or in pain, or threatened with dissolution. ‘*Hic patet ingeniis campus:*’ this field is open to all adventurers without restraint of time, or teaching, or character; and the result is as obvious in fact, as it was easily and clearly foreseen to be inevitable. Education and

diligence, scholarship and learning, enjoying no privilege, are at a discount: they are rather impediments than advantages. They interfere with the intolerant and arrogant pride of republican equality, and are therefore regarded with suspicion and dislike. I say it with pain and shame, with the profoundest mortification and the keenest regret, the influence of these circumstances upon our noble but depressed profession is but too visible, and it is to be most seriously feared that the medical character, already impaired in some of these United States, is deteriorating in all. We are loudly called on for an effort to restore and maintain it. Conventions and conferences, and general assemblies may depose an unworthy brother from the clerical dignity—the bar may expel a discreditable member by a public and official act of great force and weight—but we have no such resource. Our local societies are destitute of power, because those who are fearful of their control keep aloof from them. A national medical association, however, may, if well organized, well officered, and well conducted, through its branches, or affiliated societies diffused over our wide and still expanding territory, exert a most beneficial influence, inevitable and irresistible. I trust that the organization of such a body may be effected at the next meeting of the Convention, and would fain hope that the countenance and aid of our government may, in some constitutional mode, be extended to it; perhaps through a recognized connection with the National Smithsonian Institute.

“Meanwhile, let us endeavour to enlighten the judgments and arouse the proper feelings of our fellow-citizens upon this subject, by urging on their consideration the necessity of instituting some available method of removing the stigma under which we labour, and placing the practice of medicine upon a proper and honourable footing. The suggestion of the Convention, as to this point, is unobjectionable. Let the business of teaching and licensing be separated—let the examinations be open to all. Let them be conducted by a board of examiners, selected in every state upon the most liberal principles, and constituted of eminent, well educated, and otherwise competent persons, without reference to sects or names, or opinions of any kind, but simply to character and qualification. Among the recommendations of the Parisian Medical Congress, of which I have spoken with not undeserved

respect, we find something similar. ‘The admission and final examination of doctors should be entrusted,’ they say, ‘to a jury, formed partly of professors and regular examiners, and partly of practitioners. The examinations of students should be made even still more practical than they now are. In addition to the five examinations already exacted, a sixth should be added on the subjects of medical philosophy and history.’ Surely such a body may be brought together, both impartial and every way trustworthy. Among these, if proper individuals be found in their ranks, let every class of practising physicians, every school, so called, be represented; the Homœopathist, the Allopathist, the Botanist, the Hydropathist, the Hydropsudopathist, the Dysopathist, the Expectant, and the Perturber, the Galvanist and Electro-Galvanist, the Magnetist, the Mystic, the Mesmerist and the Eclectic. Let the diploma of no college weigh with them, except so far as it is proved by experience to be conferred exclusively upon diligence, character and merit. Let no patent right to play upon the credulity of the miserable be in any manner recognized; no miraculous pretensions considered. Let them only, after the closest scrutiny and fullest examination of such candidates as may present themselves, from whatever quarter, decide upon the important question of their fitness or unfitness to be entrusted with the physical care and protection of the community. Such is now the course of the general government with regard to our army and navy, upon whose official list no physician or surgeon can be appointed, whether graduated or not, or from whatever college or university, without passing through an ordeal so strict, a scrutiny so thorough, that there is little fear of the intrusion of the ignorant or unfit candidate. And is it possible that any civic or municipal body or state can continue to treat this matter with neglect or indifference; or do we regard the lives of our soldiers and our sailors as worthy of more exact supervision, and more tender care, and deserving the devotion of a higher order of intelligence and preparation than those of our wives and children!

“The Board I have alluded to, in one of their reports, offer an explanation of the well known fact, that ‘comparatively a small number only of the candidates examined were found qualified for appointment.’ Observe, I pray you, the mortifying proportion of those who meet with success.



In 1841, fourteen (14) were examined—approved but six (6).

In 1842, ten (10) were examined—approved but two (2).

In 1843, ten (10) were examined—approved but four (4).

In 1844, seven (7) were examined—approved but three (3).

In 1845, ten (10) were examined—approved but two (2).

"It is a most severe censure on our ordinary course of instructions, but not less merited than severe, (when we reflect that the candidates were all of them graduates of our recognized Colleges,) that the alleged causes of failure set down, are 'insufficient preparatory education, a hurried course of professional pupilage, and want of proficiency in practical anatomy, in pathology, and in clinical medicine.'"

*Schools as they are and as they should be.*

—By H. M. BULLITT, M. D., Professor of Physiology and Pathology in the Medical Department of St. Louis University.

Medical education is a subject in which all classes of men should feel deeply interested. The demand for physicians is a public demand, and not a mere professional requirement. The rapid increase of population in the United States has created such a call for doctors, that each year there seems to have arisen further necessity for the extension of the facilities of acquiring medical instruction. This necessity has been recognized not alone by the profession, but as well by the public, at whose cost indeed many of the medical institutions have been established. Every principal city in the Union accordingly has its school, and some of them are provided with several; so that the supply of schools at least seems to be now equal to the demand for doctors. Now, whilst we are willing to admit that there has been, and will continue to be, an annually increasing demand for physicians to supply the growing population of the new states, and that this demand creates a demand for new schools, we doubt much whether the schools that are springing up in all directions, are the description of institutions which are calculated to supply the country with such physicians as it is entitled to. As a general rule, these institutions are established by, or at the instance of physicians who have either been disappointed in practice, or who for some reason have never become practitioners; restless, disappointed men, whose sole object is lucre, and who regard medical

teaching as a traffic, to be carried on as other kinds of trade, merely for money, and who look upon the schools as business firms, to be sustained by hard puffing, diligent electioneering, or *drumming*, and extensive advertising. With such men it is matter of little moment whether the students who may be attracted by this canvassing and advertising, are educated or not. They regard the relation of student and teacher as precisely similar to that of buyer and seller, and make the rule "caveat emptor" the standard of their moral obligations. Institutions which are in the hands of such persons cannot of course be suitable establishments for the education of physicians. The students of medicine generally are young men whose experience in the affairs of life is necessarily limited, and whose ability to judge of the qualifications of teachers of medicine is still more limited. They start from their homes with the determination to enter as pupils of some school which has been recommended by their preceptors, but before they can reach their destination they are often compelled to pass through some one or more places where there are schools of medicine, which, like other business firms, have their *drummers* stationed about in all directions, by whom every youth who looks like a medical student, is to be beset with soft words and winning solicitations. Thus inexperienced students are continually diverted from their original determinations, and induced, in disregard of the advice of their preceptors, to matriculate and disgorge the price of their tuition into the coffers of an institution of which they have never heard, and are left, perhaps, to spend their winter under auspices so little favourable to improvement, that they return in the spring with nothing gained but a bundle of *tickets*. Or it may be, that they have left their homes with directions to become the pupils of a particular school in a certain city, which they may be fortunate enough to reach without being interrupted on their way. Here perhaps there is another school than that to which they have been consigned, and it often happens that they are scarcely set down at the hotel of their choice before they are approached by some *kind hearted, disinterested personage*, who volunteers his advice, which is to disregard that of their preceptors, and become the pupils of another school; which, in the estimation of the adviser, is infinitely superior to that to which they have been consigned. This *pur-*

ports, of course, to be the advice of a *wholly disinterested* man, who is presumed, from his residence on the spot, to be perfectly familiar with the comparative merits of the schools. The reader doubtless recognizes in this personage the "drummer" of the school whose interest he so insidiously advocates. Well, the unsuspecting students are induced at last to visit the school thus highly recommended by this unknown *friend*, and compare its teachers with those of the school which their *true friend*, their preceptor, has recommended: and thus they are seduced into the clutches of these *professional speculators*. The result may be easily foretold. If they be susceptible of flattery, as most young men are, the superlatively condescending attentions of these professional dignitaries will so charm and fascinate them, that they will find it almost impossible to resist the solicitations to matriculate, and take their "tickets," even before they have visited the school of their deliberate choice at all. No comparison, therefore, is made; but even were this attempted, students are not qualified to decide between good and profitable teaching and its more fascinating semblance. These are not mere fancy sketches, drawn for amusement, nor for sinister purposes, but veritable pictures, as true to facts as the most faithful Daguerreotype can be to nature.

Now in view of the dangers by which students are thus beset, two things become important: first, that private preceptors should regard it as one of their most imperative duties to their pupils to select a school for them, and guard them effectually against the danger of being seduced off from this school of their choice. The pupils should be made to understand that certain schools will use every means which avarice can suggest to obtain their money by securing them as pupils; and they should be especially instructed that such a course is indicative at once of want of professional pride and of conscious inferiority. I hold that no honorable man can descend so low as to use such means, and no man of real merit as a teacher can do it; because true science imparts to her faithful followers a dignity and elevation of character which would revolt at the idea of deception or injustice. An honourable man, such as the true lover of science is always found to be, regards the money with which a pupil starts from his home as already the property of those to whose hands he has been consigned, and

would look upon himself as little better than a swindler were he to become possessed of it by seducing the pupil from the course advised by his preceptor. Such interference with the rights of the private preceptor, or with the interests of the school recommended by him, must elicit the scorn and contempt of all honourable men. A true lover of science, conscious of his own merit, would spurn the thought of gathering a class by any such means. Let every physician, therefore, who undertakes the responsible office of private preceptor, make it his especial duty to select from amongst the various schools of the country the one which, in his judgment, may seem most worthy, and use his influence with his pupils to induce them to finish their course of study in such institution. In this way the schools will be judged by those whose finished education is presumed to qualify them for the task. The teachers must thus stand or fall by the judgment of their peers. And mere speculators in the business of medical teaching will less easily build up their schools by means of flattery and deception.

But it may be said that those who are likely to be the private preceptors of the majority of pupils cannot, from their remote situations, in the villages and country places, have opportunities of forming just estimates of the abilities of teachers whom they have never heard lecture, and that they must therefore leave it with the pupil to decide amongst the schools according to the information they may get after leaving home, aided by their own observation. We must confess we do not see the force of this objection to the course we have recommended; for there are various means of estimating the merit of a school, within the reach of every physician. In the first place, every public teacher should be a contributor to the cause of his profession, through some one or more of the medical journals, and thus afford the profession some evidence of his merit. But the best method of estimating the desert of a school, is by the proficiency of its alumni. Most of the schools are yearly sending forth graduates to all parts of the country, and the attainments and success of these, as they are exhibited whilst they are yet fresh from the colleges, is perhaps the best criterion of the worthiness of their alma mater. But granting that the private preceptors are not in possession of the means of judging between the schools, it becomes necessary in that case that they should instruct their stu-



dents as to what constitutes good teaching. The pupil should be made to understand that the mere manner and voice of the lecturer have less to do with the business of scientific teaching than young men are prone to suppose. A musical voice and stump-orator manner will please, perhaps fascinate the mind of the inexperienced student; but these are far from being necessary, or even commendable in scientific lectures. The style of the best and most esteemed teachers of science is entirely conversational, and necessarily so, because it is only when the speaker begins to theorize, or rant, or moralize, that the manner and cadences of the stump-orator, or the forensic or pulpit orators ever can be advantageously employed. There are so many different styles of lecturing in the different medical schools of our Union, that it is admitted to be a difficult matter to determine the exact degree of faultiness of the bad; but we can apply to them the method of exclusion, and thus be able to determine when they are not good. This is to be accomplished by indicating the styles which are adopted by the best teachers and found to be best in practice. But as this will require some care and reflection, we shall postpone its consideration for the present.—*St. Louis Med. and Surg. Journal*, Jan., 1847.

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*Medical Education in the United States. An Address, delivered to the Students of the Philadelphia Association for Medical Instruction, at the close of the Session of 1846. By ALFRED STILLE, M. D., Lecturer on Pathology and the Practice of Medicine. Philadelphia, 1846.*

In this well-written and appropriate address, the lecturer, instead of seeking the favour of his class by adulation, as is not unfrequently done,—assuring them that American physicians greatly excel all others, and flattering them with the annually repeated, thread-bare compliment, that particularly those whom he has the honour to address constitute the best qualified class to which he has ever lectured,—has the boldness to descant on the defects of medical education in this country, and to show that the diploma is so easily obtained that its acquisition affords no guarantee that the possessor has a sufficient knowledge of the healing art to be entrusted with the lives of human beings.

After some preliminary remarks, pertinent to the occasion, the author adduces the history of the summer schools of Phila-

delphia, to show that the winter courses alone are insufficient for perfecting a medical education; and he insists that the same methods are requisite for producing accomplished physicians here as experience has shown to be most effectual elsewhere. He then contrasts the plan of education which has raised medicine to its present level in Europe with that which has repressed its advancement here.

"In *Austria*," he remarks, "before commencing the study of medicine, the pupil must have attended the primary schools four years, spent six years in the gymnasia, (which correspond to our grammar schools), and two under the Faculty of Philosophy, learning Greek, Latin, Mathematics, Astronomy, History, and modern languages, and have obtained a certificate of proficiency in all these branches. In *Bavaria*, after the ordinary collegiate education, two years are devoted to preparatory studies, including logic, physics, botany, natural history, mineralogy, and chemistry, and a satisfactory examination on all these subjects must be passed. In *Paris*, before a young man can enter upon his medical studies, he must have graduated both in the arts and sciences; that is, he must have studied, and passed an examination on, all the branches just enumerated, except botany, chemistry, and mineralogy, the two former of which are comprised in the medical course proper. In the *United States* alone, of all civilized countries, the student enters the halls of medicine without the slightest test of his fitness for the studies he is about to undertake, without one word of inquiry regarding his previous education. Whether he comes from the academic shades of Charlottesville or New Haven, or from a mechanical trade, or from agricultural labour, he occupies the same seat, listens to the same lectures, and is submitted to the same final test of his professional attainments. How is it possible that one invariable system of instruction should be suitable for individuals so different in their capacity to understand and profit by it, or how can it be expected that they should obtain anything approaching to an equality of practical skill?

"You have heard, doubtless, that several of the most distinguished physicians of Europe began life by an apprenticeship to the rudest of the mechanical arts; but it must not be overlooked, that they did not pass at once from these into medical studies; they were compelled first to acquire the same

amount of classical and mathematical proficiency, which is exacted from all who aspire to the medical profession. Their example only confirms our position. 'It will be obvious,' says the Edinburgh College of Surgeons, in a recent notification, 'to all who consider the extended and complicated nature of medical science, that much of the success of the student in the prosecution of its various branches must depend upon the previous cultivation of his mental faculties, and that it is consequently of the utmost importance, both as regards the interests of the public and the future comfort and respectability of the practitioner, that all who apply to the study of surgery should have previously received a liberal education.' And Sir James Clark, than whom no higher authority could be cited, uses the following emphatic language: 'It is from being uninstructed in the commonest principles of philosophy, and consequently unacquainted with the laws by which the various physical agents amidst which we live are regulated, and the effects of these in promoting health and inducing disease, that medical men have failed in some of their highest duties; that they have been less efficient ministers of health, and less successful investigators of disease than they would otherwise have proved.' Against the force of such examples, and the weight of such authorities, what have we to oppose? A furious blast of prejudice, but not a breath of reason.

"After all the preparatory study we have described, what term of attendance on medical lectures is required of European students? In Austria and France *fifty* months; in Prussia and the secondary states of Germany *forty* months; in Great Britain and Ireland *twenty-four* months; while in the United States we undertake to produce a competent physician in *eight* months, or one-third of the time deemed necessary by the lowest of the European schools!

"And what subjects are taught in foreign schools? At Vienna, Berlin, and Paris, besides the few practical branches to which our instruction is almost exclusively confined, the student in one or the other of these cities is obliged to learn Botany, Zoology, Mineralogy, General Anatomy, Comparative Physiology, the History of Medicine, General Pathology, Pathological Anatomy, Surgical Pathology, Medical Physics, Medical Jurisprudence, Hygiene, General Therapeutics, and Clinical Medicine. But the lec-

tures on these various branches are not all delivered at the same time, nor to the same classes. The first year of the course is devoted exclusively to anatomy, physiology, and the other fundamental departments of the science; in the next the general principles of disease are taught; in the following one special pathology and its adjunct therapeutics form the principal subjects of the lectures; and it is not until the student is thoroughly versed in the theory of medicine, and the principles of medical art, that he is taken to the bedside to witness their application. In most of the continental schools, the last two years of the course are chiefly occupied with clinical medicine. In Paris, there are about 500 beds in hospital wards especially set apart for this purpose, and attended by nine clinical professors; besides about 6000 beds accessible to the student, at many of which regular clinical instruction is given by physicians who are not members of the faculty. In addition to all this, nearly sixty public courses, most of them gratuitous, are delivered by *agrégés* and others, upon almost every subject connected with medicine, including insanity, practical midwifery, zoology, minor surgery, diseases of women, of children, of the genital organs, of the skin, of the eyes, of the ears, of the heart, lungs, &c. Is it probable, think you, that men who are obliged to learn so much, and who may, if they choose, learn so much more, can be inferior as practitioners to those whose medical pupillage, so far as regards public instruction, is limited to eight months? The question answers itself. In Germany there is a body of practitioners denominated surgeons of the second class, whose functions are limited to executing the orders of graduated physicians and surgeons in bleeding, cupping, applying leeches, &c., they are prohibited from treating internal diseases, and are responsible for the results of the more serious surgical operations they may undertake. (*See on Medical Organization*, p. 16.) And yet these persons are subjected to a course of instruction as complete as that pursued in our best colleges, except in medicine proper. They must either have served three years as assistant surgeons in the army, or have attended the courses of a medico-chirurgical school, after which they must undergo an examination upon physiology, materia medica, surgery, anatomy, and the clinical management of surgical diseases. In France the *officiers de santé*, an



inferior grade of physicians, hold a position somewhat similar to that of the German second class surgeons. They are forbidden to perform serious operations without the supervision of a medical graduate. And yet to obtain a diploma conferring such equivocal privileges, they are obliged either to study six years with a medical practitioner, or to follow the hospitals for five consecutive years; besides which they must pass a public examination upon anatomy, medicine, surgery, and pharmacy. Are we not bound to provide for our physicians a better education than is received by this class of practitioners, the suppression of which, as a public nuisance, is called for by the unanimous voice of the medical profession in France?

"The examinations by which is tested the proficiency of candidates for the Doctor's degree in Europe offer, if possible, a still more painful contrast to ours, than the length, the variety, and the perfection of the courses of instruction. At Vienna the students are examined by each professor at the end of every six months, twelve at a time, before they are permitted to pass to a higher class. At the completion of his course of study, the pupil is obliged to lay before each of his examiners a history of at least two cases attended by him in a medical clinic during his fifth year. He then undergoes two separate examinations, the first upon anatomy, botany, natural history, physiology, general and special pathology, both medical and surgical, and general therapeutics, on each for a quarter of an hour; the second, which does not take place until some time afterwards, upon chemistry, legal medicine, ophthalmology, and clinical medicine, after which he must publicly defend a thesis written by himself in the Latin language.—(*Wilde's Austria*.) In Prussia the system is even stricter. The student is examined no less than four times during the term of his probation. The third is at the conclusion of his studies, and lasts for three hours, three or four candidates being examined at the same time. After having passed this ordeal, he receives the title of doctor, but has no license to practice; to obtain which, he must submit to the fourth examination, which lasts for several days. At the anatomical examination he has to describe a bone or other organ named to him. In the surgical examination, he must discuss a subject chosen by his examiners, and publicly perform, and explain the different steps of a

surgical operation. He has, besides, the charge of two patients in the hospital for a fortnight, taking daily notes of the cases. Three times a week he is questioned at the bedside, and is examined upon his notes at the conclusion of the trial. Finally, he must submit to an oral examination by eight of the most learned and scientific men in the kingdom, who make full inquiry into the candidate's proficiency in all the departments of medical science. (*Lee on Med. Organization; Med. Recorder*, vol. xiii. p. 483.) In Paris the examinations for the degree of M.D. are public, and are five in number. The first, at the commencement of the second year, in natural philosophy, natural history and botany; the second, at the end of the third year, in anatomy and physiology; the other three at the conclusion of the term of study. Each candidate is examined orally for three quarters of an hour, besides undergoing a clinical inquiry at the hospital, and defending a thesis. He must also give practical evidence of his skill in dissection, and operative surgery. It is now proposed that examinations shall be held at the end of each year on the studies of that year, and, at the conclusion of the whole course, on the studies of the entire course, to ensure that they are both well learned, and well remembered."

The author then gives a sketch of medical education in Great Britain, showing that, like our own borrowed from it, it is very inferior to the continental system.\*

"We are told," he observes, "that it has lately become fashionable to preach medical reform, and to insist upon the need of high qualifications in a physician; but we shall now endeavour to prove, that the existing fashion is only the fuller development of a long and fondly cherished opinion, and one, let me add, which, like most others of such gradual and steady growth, must in the end prevail." He quotes Drs. Rush,† Bard,‡ Hodge,§ J. Jackson,|| Mann,|| Spalding,|| Parsons,|| Mussey,|| Woodward,|| Meigs,¶

\* For a fuller account of British Medical education, the reader is referred to an analysis of *Lee on Med. Organization &c.*, in the *Am. Journ. of Med. Sci.* Jan., 1847, p. 91.

† Lectures.

‡ Dissert. on Med. Education, by J. G. Coffin, M. D. 1822.

§ Oration before Philada. Med. Soc., 1823.

|| Address of Med. Convention at Northampton, Mass., 1827.

¶ Oration before Philada. Med. Soc., 1829.

S. Jackson,\* J. R. Coates,† Wood,‡ and finally the expression of the National Medical Convention, to show that our system of medical instruction is defective. These distinguished men "have condemned it either indirectly," he remarks, "by insisting upon the necessity of qualifications far superior to those required by our schools, or they have directly denounced its errors and defects. If then, as we have shown, the particular faults signalized by our eminent critics are precisely those which do not exist in the medical institutions of Continental Europe; and if, as we presume will not now be questioned, those institutions are promotive of the best interests of science, it seems to follow as a necessary consequence, either that we are bound to remodel American education upon European principles, or be prepared to demonstrate their uselessness or inferiority. The uselessness of knowledge! the inferiority of wisdom to superficial attainments! of science to routine! Who does not shrink from such a conclusion? and yet it is a legitimate deduction from the arguments and conduct of those who would have us stand as mere spectators of the race, while all the rest of Christendom is sweeping by us to the goal which we might be the first to reach. What knowledge is *not* useful to the physician,—to him, the natural philosopher, the priest of nature, as his name implies,—what department of science is there which does not furnish him with light in his researches, or with the means of preventing or curing disease,—and that not collaterally, but directly, I had almost said necessarily? In the old world, or in the new, what class of men is so well educated? 'What other profession,' to quote the language of the Minister of Public Instruction to the recent French Medical Congress, 'what other profession gives such securities to the State? You alone, before taking your position in society, before rendering it that assistance which is the fruit of your arduous labours, have to pass three different Faculties, that of Arts, that of Sciences, and finally that of Medicine. From no other profession or class of society is so much required.'"

There are some who do not perceive any force in such arguments, and there are others

"who, infected with the pestilent utilitarian doctrines of the present day, would have medical education restricted to what they are pleased to call, by way of eminence, the practical departments, forgetting that a medical man must not only know *how*, but *WHEN* to prescribe or operate."

"But," he remarks, "perhaps, the most extraordinary argument which has yet been urged against improving medical education, is, that 'we shall turn from our medical schools most of their aspirants into more humble channels, or into the walks of empiricism.' (*Dr. Paine's Address*, p. 9.) The common impression is, that the lower the standard of education, the more rife is quackery; but now we are assured, that our young countrymen have so obstinate an attachment to ignorance, that they will cling to it rather than be enlightened; and that the more we endeavour to instruct them, the more resolutely will they refuse instruction. Is it to be believed that if several of the leading schools were to offer much greater advantages than the rest, although at a greater expense, they would be deserted by their pupils? Even now, what institutions are the most frequented? the cheapest? According to the authorities already cited, the best of these schools provide little more than the necessities of scientific life; and some of the inferior ones boast that they have discovered a plan of reducing still lower the mental subsistence, without starving students to death. Do these ingenious imitators of the Greek simpleton complain that their halls are encumbered with much-enduring disciples? Although it may happen, now and then, that one honourable name—like the king's effigy on an adulterated coin—may make a college pass for more than it is worth, yet in general, and in the long run, real excellence in morals, ability in teaching, a high order of instruction, and collateral advantages, will attract the greatest number of students to a medical institution. If that venerable university, which for so long a period stood without a rival in the United States, had not really afforded the best medical education to be procured here, how long, think you, would she have retained her supremacy? It scarcely admits of a doubt that whatever institution shall first prove that it is able to produce the most accomplished physicians, must very soon find its pupils greatly augmented, so that without imposing new burdens upon the students, it may afford an ample remuneration to the pro-

\* Introductory Lecture, 1833.

† Oration before Philadelphia Med. Soc., 1835.

‡ Address to Graduates, 1836.



essors. By such means the aggregate number of graduates in the United States might decline, but it would be at the expense of those secondary establishments, which at present neither educate their classes well, nor permit them to go where they would be better taught. Sir James Clark shares in the delusion of most of us. 'Is it surprising,' he exclaims, 'that quacks and quackery should thrive, when such is the education of the regular practitioners?' and again, 'by requiring a higher standard of education, the profession would be made more respectable; . . . and should it have the effect of diminishing the number of medical students, neither the profession nor the public would, I apprehend, be the losers by such a result.' It is estimated that there are 40,000 physicians in the United States, or one to about every five hundred inhabitants; and these quite exclusive of the hordes of Thompsonians, homœopathists, and other false doctors, which swarm in our midst: while in France, where irregulars of this sort can scarcely be said to have a distinct existence, there is only one medical man to every thousand souls, and this estimate, we believe, does not include the medical corps of the immense army and navy of that country. Yet the late medical congress which met in Paris laboured together with the government to make the proportion still smaller. These facts, taken along with the positive experience of the profession in this country, leave no doubt of our numbers being already far beyond what are needed, or can be honourably supported. No, gentlemen, if quackery is rife amongst us, and is daily growing more impudent, it is because the medical diploma is made accessible to everybody, and hundreds of young men are enticed from the honest pursuits of agriculture and trade, to enter a profession in which they must either bring dishonour upon themselves and it, or starve."

The following are the reforms which the lecturer conceives to be most desirable, and at the present time most feasible:

"First, the prolongation of the lecture term from four to six months, without greatly increasing the number of lectures beyond that already delivered, in order to give the student time to think, read, and attend the hospitals. Subsequently the entire term of public study might be prolonged from two to three winters; an attendance, as now, required on two courses only of the subjects

named in the existing curriculum, and the student restricted during the first year to the lectures on anatomy, chemistry, physiology, and materia medica. In the second or third year, the instruction might include several departments not now studied, such as general pathology, morbid anatomy, medical jurisprudence and hygiene, of which one course might for the present suffice. I can see no possible objection to introducing these improvements, and though not alone sufficient, they would make a commencement and a foundation for a more perfect system, which would then follow, as a matter of course.

"But in nothing does it seem more necessary that existing regulations should be modified, than in the character of the examination for a degree. Would it be credited by European physicians, or even by the laity in this country, that a student might present himself before the faculty of one of our medical colleges without the slightest knowledge either of the 'practice of medicine,' or of surgery, and yet if he passed a satisfactory examination on anatomy, chemistry, materia medica, obstetrics, and physiology, he might demand a diploma declaring him thoroughly versed in the knowledge of medicine, (*'artis medicæ scientia plenius instructum;'*) and the faculty, bound by their own published laws, could not disallow his claim? For 'if there should not be three negative votes, the candidate is ENTITLED to his degree.' This is perhaps an extreme case, but a possible, and therefore a fair one; for who does not know that students sometimes make up their minds to be 'blackballed' by one or two professors, from whose lectures they have chosen to absent themselves, or whose department they find distasteful. In what terms can we speak of a system so fearfully demoralizing in its tendency? In some institutions, it may work less evil in practice than it threatens, not because the principle is less pernicious, but because a partial antidote to it exists in the personal integrity of the professors; but there can be no doubt that in some colleges the letter of the law is borrowed, but not the virtuous spirit to direct its application. Let us earnestly hope that this unrighteous system may be abolished, that examinations may either be made public, or that competent persons may be associated with the faculty, to ensure their being impartially conducted; that the knowledge of the candidate shall be fully tested, not only by oral but by practical

trials, in prescribing and compounding medicines, in anatomy, surgery, and clinical medicine."

*Medical Degrees, and Medical Education in Great Britain.*—[The following account of the facility with which the diploma of M. D. can be procured in Great Britain, extracted from the *Dublin Medical Press* (Jan. 27, 1847), shows how well founded are the complaints of those who demand medical reform. Where such a condition of things exists, can it excite wonder that a medical man should advertise for a situation as a valet, (see *Am. Journ. Med. Sci.*, Nov. 1839, p. 249,) or that practitioners should be found willing to contract to attend patients and find medicines at two shillings a head\* per annum?

Would that we could add, they manage these things better in this country, but we cannot do so with a due regard to truth. The excessive multiplication of schools, with the consequent rivalry engendered for pupils, has lessened the cost of a diploma, and lowered the requirements for its acquisition;—hence have resulted an overstocked profession, and the introduction into its ranks of many unqualified persons, with the inevitable sequences, underbiddings for practice, and the resort to mean acts to obtain patients, which degrade the doctor from the rank of a gentleman, lessen the estimate placed by the public on the value of professional services, and afford encouragement to quackery by annihilating the barrier which ought to exist between the regular practitioner and the quack.]

"We have reason to believe that the Giesen is not the only diploma forged in England, but what of that? Is there any great difference between a forged diploma and one obtained without adequate study and examination? We do not say that it is universally the case, but we do say that diplomas, both medical and surgical, not continental, can be obtained without attendance on lec-

\* A correspondent of the *Provincial Medical and Surgical Journal* (see No. of that Journal for Oct. 28th, 1846) states that a surgeon in an adjoining village has contracted with 40 agricultural labourers to attend them and find them medicine for two shillings a year, and that other medical men accept the office of club doctors, at a rate of payment of no more than *three shillings* a year. He further states that so far as his acquaintance with such matters extends, *six shillings a year is the maximum.*

tures, dissections, and hospitals, and without answering any examination sufficient to test the knowledge of the candidate. Nay, they can be had without opening a book, except such a one as is constructed for the purpose of aiding the memory and supplying answers to questions. It is now admitted on all hands, that what are called certificates, and what are held to be the sole qualification for a diploma, are of no value as evidence of education. The majority of students attend lectures, hospitals, and dissecting-rooms just as they please, and no one ventures to enforce discipline, because any attempt to do so is met by a threat that next year another school or hospital will be preferred. The examinations are equally inefficient, and for the same reason. A rejection in Dublin sets half-a-dozen young gentlemen to flight to seek diplomas elsewhere. Every attempt to correct this deplorable state of things, as far as this country is concerned, has been defeated by this disgraceful scramble after pupil money. Our readers will, perhaps, scarcely believe it when we tell them that all advances made by the Irish College to that of England, with the hope of correcting these evils, have not only been rejected, but rejected with discourtesy; and that in every case where the Dublin College has refused its sanction to imperfections and irregularities in the schools, that of London has at once, and without pause, explanation, or inquiry, granted its recognition and approbation. No questions are asked, no inquiries made, respecting the student's education, beyond the entering of his 'certificates;' and as before his examination he never was seen or heard of, so after it is over he never again appears. In fact, such is the loose and slovenly method of doing business at the London College, that the strongest temptations are held out to the Irish student going there, not only to escape from work, but to evade the regulations promulgated for his government. Some idea may be formed of the extent to which this apparent collusion is carried, from the fact that a London engraver has lately informed the Council of the College of Surgeons of Ireland that he has, by order of an individual, executed *fac-simile* copies of the copper-plate engravings of the certificates granted by the professors; and this is done in the face of day, and with little care for concealment, and done with impunity. If, then, here in the metropolis of England, forged diplomas and forged certificates of attendance on lectures are openly



sold, without either power or inclination on the part of any public medical body to prevent so monstrous an outrage, or to punish the perpetrators of it, is it not high time that some other competent authority should be established to put an end to such a state of things? We have advocated medical reform in this journal incessantly for seven long years, and elsewhere for a much longer period, but never since we came to consider the matter have we been so thoroughly convinced of its necessity as we now are. It seems as if the defeat of the several reform bills had given confidence to the upholders of abuses, and rendered them so callous to reproof or remonstrance that they are determined to hold their usurped power in despite of either legislature, government, or public opinion; but we entertain a sanguine hope that the time has arrived for successfully resisting a course so arbitrary and unreasonable."

#### QUACKERY.

*Empiricism and Secret Remedies.*—At a Convention of the Physicians of Virginia, held in Richmond in December last, Dr. PEEBLES, of Petersburg, in behalf of a committee on empiricism and secret remedies, made an interesting report, accompanied with the following resolutions:—

1st. *Resolved*, That the medical faculty will refuse all professional intercourse with any physician who prepares, and who uses in his practice, or who advertises for public use any secret remedy.

2d. *Resolved*, That under all circumstances, as far as practicable, the medical profession will discourage the use of remedies the constituent elements of which are concealed from the profession generally from motives of gain.

3d. *Resolved*, That the practice of physicians in giving certificates as to the efficiency of patent and secret medicines, deserves and receives decided reprobation.

4th. *Resolved*, That were things ordered as they should be, no man who had not received a proper medical education, would be allowed to practice upon the health and lives of the community; and in a more advanced state of conservative legislation, the law-making powers might be confidently invoked to prohibit the sale of nostrums, the constituents of which are not plainly set forth on each parcel.

5th. *Resolved*, That the editor of the *Medical News* receive the thanks of the Con-

vention for his sedulous efforts to expose medical delusion, and that other medical journals be invited to co-operate in an effort so laudable.

Your committee would further report, that the course pursued by several of the religious journals of England, in refusing to publish quack advertisements, on the ground that they encourage an evil which is exerting a most pernicious influence on the health of the public, receives our most cordial approbation, and they hope that the religious and secular journals of our country will follow so good an example. These journals exert a most potent influence for good or for evil on the minds of those who, suffering under the nervous and functional derangements incident to improper indulgence of appetite, or irregular habits, are attracted to any remedy which promises speedy relief, if recommended by its publication in a religious or secular paper, however ridiculous and unfounded may be its claims.

#### MEDICAL NEWS.

##### DOMESTIC INTELLIGENCE.

*National Medical Convention.*—At a meeting of the Delegates to the National Medical Convention from the city and county of Philadelphia, held at the Hall of the College of Physicians, March 9th, 1847, it was resolved to accept the polite offer made by the *Academy of Natural Sciences*, of the use of their spacious Hall for the meetings of the Convention; and the following committee was appointed to make the necessary arrangements for the meetings and deliberations of that body:—Drs. Hays, Condie, Emerson, Fox, Bridges, Norris, Morris, West, and Paul.

The above committee, in furtherance of the objects of their appointment, invite the delegates to the National Medical Convention to meet at the Hall of the Academy of Natural Sciences, west side of Broad St., near Chesnut St., on Wednesday, May 5th, at 10 o'clock A. M.

The several standing committees appointed at the last Convention, are invited to meet at the same place on Monday morning, May 3d, at 10 o'clock.

To facilitate intercourse between the delegates, they are invited to report themselves as soon after their arrival in Philadelphia as convenient, to the committee of reception and arrangement, named above, who will be at the Hall of the Academy of Natural

Sciences, on the 1st, 3d, and 4th of May, from 10 A. M. to 3 P. M., and on the evening of the 4th of May from 7 to 10 o'clock.

The secretaries of the associations who will be represented are requested to transmit, at an early day, the names of their delegates to the chairman of the committee, Dr. I. Hays.

*Delegates to the National Medical Convention.*—From the Medical Convention of Virginia, Drs. Welford, of Fredericksburg, Cabell, of the University, W. A. Patteson, of Richmond, and McGuire, of Winchester.

From the University of Louisville, Profs. Drake, Cobb, and Yandell.

From the Rhode Island Medical Society, Drs. Theophilus C. Dunn, Usher Parsons, Richmond Brownell, and George Carpenter.

From the Medical Department of the University of Missouri, Prof. J. B. Johnson.

From the New York Academy of Medicine, Drs. John Stearns, F. C. Stewart, J. R. Wood, H. D. Bulkley, V. Mott, E. De-lafield, J. C. Bliss, R. S. Kissam, D. M. Reese, E. L. Beadle, J. Linsley, O. S. Bartles, C. S. Smith, M. Hoit, W. H. Van Beuren, J. O. Pond.

From the New York Medical and Surgical Society, Drs. J. A. Swett, J. G. Adams, A. Dubois, A. C. Post, W. P. Buel.

From the New York Hospital, Dr. John Watson and John H. Griscom.

From the Medical College of Georgia, Profs. Dugas and Garvin.

From the Medical Department of St. Louis University, Prof. H. M. Bullitt.

From the Faculty of Geneva Medical College, Prof. C. A. Lee, A. B. Coventry, and J. Webster.

From the Faculty of Medical Department of the Buffalo University, Professors T. H. Hamilton, Austin Flint, J. P. White and Geo. Hadley.

*The Urine in Ascites.*—In ascites, dependent on lesion of the liver, the urine is always more or less deeply coloured; whilst in renal ascites (Bright's disease or otherwise) the urine is white and colourless—(Rayer.) This characteristic condition of urine in ascites was perfectly known to the Arabian physicians.—*Monthly Journal of Medical Science*, Dec. 1846.

*Protracted Lactation.*—Dr. I. P. SMITH, of Gloucester, relates in the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*, a case in which lac-

tation was protracted for nearly twenty years, the patient never weaning one child, till the birth of another compelled her to do so. During the period mentioned she gave birth to eight children.

*Statistics of Medical Colleges in the United States for Session of 1846-47.*

*University of Pennsylvania.*—Students 411.

*Medical Department of Transylvania University.*—The number of students was 205; graduates 62; two were admitted to an ad eundem degree, and the honorary degree was given to four, making a total of 68.

*University of Louisville.*—Number of students 354.

*Memphis Medical College.*—Number of students 55.

*Medical College of Ohio.*—Number of students 170.

*Western Reserve College.*—Number of students 216.

*Yale College.*—Graduates 28.

*Willoughby Medical College.*—Number of students 101; number of graduates 38.

*Castleton Medical College.*—Number of students in November last was 131, of whom 42 received the degree of M. D.

## FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE.

*Rudiments of a Uterus in Man, and in Males of the Mammalia.*—M. E. WEBER, Prof. of Anatomy at Leipsic, has reported the extraordinary discovery of the rudiments of a uterus in males of the mammalia.

*Royal College of Surgeons.*—Mr. JAMES PAGET has been appointed Professor of Surgery in this institution, vacant by the resignation of Mr. Lowth from severe indisposition.

*Obituary Record.*—Died at Nice, on the 16th January last, Dr. LABAT, chief physician to the Shah of Persia, aged 63.

— on the 4th Feb., at Paris, in the 70th year of his age, M. DUTROCHET, the well known discoverer of the property of endosmosis and exosmosis in organic substances.

— lately, Dr. RANQUE, chief physician to the hospital and prisons, and dean of the Faculty of Medicine of Orleans.

— lately, in his 74th year, BARON PASQUIER, chief surgeon to the King of the French.